

Remarks

Claims 1-21 are currently pending. Claims 1, 6, 10, 14 and 18 have been amended. No new claims or new matter has been added. Applicants assert that all claims are in condition for allowance as set forth more fully below.

102 Rejections

Claims 1-21 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by Ralston et al (US Pat 6,842,773). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection in pointing out that amended independent claims 1, 6, 10, 14 and 18 all now recite similar elements that are not disclosed by Ralston.

The Office Action rejects independent claims 1, 6, 10, 14 and 18 by stating that Ralston teaches all of the elements. The Office Action equates the Ralston process for blocking and sorting bulk e-mail inbound to a recipient mail box (i.e. a SPAM blocker), to the system, methods and medium for preventing an e-mail received in an in-box from being forwarded that is recited in the above referenced claims. However, it should be noted that there are fundamental differences between what Ralston teaches and the claims.

Amended independent claims 1, 6, 10 and 18 recite, generally, a system, method and medium that allows a sender to code a message that subsequently detects and selectively prevents the forwarding of that electronic message once it is received by the intended recipient.

Claim 1, 6, 10 and 14

For example claim 1 recites, in pertinent part,

“a system for detecting and selectively preventing the forwarding of an electronic message, wherein the message is sent by a sender and received by a recipient . . . comprising . . . a selection module wherein the message selection module allows the sender to purposely identify selected messages by including commands in the message body . . . a search module in communication with the message database for determining whether a second message identifier associated with a received electronic message is contained in the message database and, if the message database contains the second message identifier, preventing forwarding of the received message.”

These recitations are contrary to Ralston. Ralston teaches the use of an exemplar and a key word data base to screen out unsolicited text messages. The exemplar data base

determines and stores fingerprints from previous unsolicited messages in an exemplar store. (Col. 6, l. 1-17). A message is scanned for fingerprints. If the fingerprints are found the message is considered suspect and are sent to a bulk mail folder. (Col. 8, l. 24-34).

The key word database contains terms that, in the past, were unique to and saliently identifies an unsolicited e-mail message that contains any of those terms as an unsolicited message. If a message is scanned and a key word is found, the message is discarded and never reaches the intended recipient. (Col. 5, l. 35-40). In both the case of keywords and fingerprints, the Ralston method must develop a fingerprint or keyword for all unsolicited messages, retroactively, and then use the fingerprint or keyword to deter future unsolicited messages before they reach the hapless recipient, not after. Ralston does not teach a system or method that prevents the message from being forwarded once it has been received by a recipient. Furthermore, Ralston does not teach that forwarding by a recipient of a message that has been received is done by using a message identifier associated the electronic message in a message database, or as stated in claim 6, a blacklist database.

Claim 18

In addition to the previous discussion, the Office Action equated the creation of fingerprints and keywords from unsolicited messages on a reactive basis (Col. 5, l. 21-43) to the proactive “user input for preventing forwarding” as recited in claim 18. The Office Action also equated the sorting of legitimate and unsolicited messages into separate mail folders (Col.3, l. 44-55) in Ralston to the “preventing forwarding of one or more electronic mail messages “ as recited in claim 18.

Amended claim 18 recites a computer readable medium containing instructions that when executed by a computer perform the acts of receiving user input for preventing forwarding of one or more received electronic mail messages, storing matching input in a blacklist database, and upon a subsequent attempt to forward one of the one or more received electronic mail messages by the recipient who has received the one or more electronic mail messages, referencing the user input relative to the matching input in the blacklist database and preventing forwarding by the recipient.

Ralston is not capable of accepting proactive input from the sender to prevent forwarding by a recipient of a specific message that has been received as recited in the claims. Instead, the Ralston system diverts unsolicited messages before they get to a recipient. Just as for claims 1, 6, 10 and 14, Ralston is not concerned with preventing forwarding of a message by a recipient and does not teach all the elements recited in the claims.

Accordingly, for at least these reasons, claims 1, 6, 10, 14 and 18 are allowable over Ralston. Dependant claims 2-5, 7-9, 11-13, 15-17 and 19-21, depend from allowable claims 1, 6, 10, 14 and 18 and are also allowable for at least the same reasons.

103 Rejections

Claim 20 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ralston in view of Leonard (US Pat 6,721,784). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. As noted above for the §102 rejections, claim 20 depends from allowable independent claim 18 and is also allowable over the cited references for at least the same reasons.

Furthermore, in considering Leonard's disclosure regarding "May Not Forward" controls of FIG. 5 that senders may select, this control is said to be a may not forward command in the message header. There is no discussion of an identifier in the message that has a match in a blacklist database that is used to prevent forwarding. To the contrary, as shown in FIG. 15 and discussed at col. 20, line 62 – col. 21, line 8, it appears that a receiving computer must be utilizing an applet that decodes the control information previously appended by a central server in box 510 in order to implement the limitation on handling of the message including prevent forwarding. There is no disclosure that the applet makes any comparison of a message identifier to a message database or blacklist in order to prevent forwarding of the message by the user. Thus, Leonard alone or in combination with Ralston fails to disclose the elements of the claims 1-21.

Conclusion

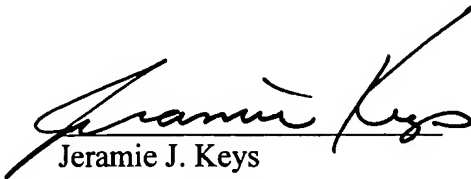
Applicants assert that the application including claims 1-21 is in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration in view of the amendment

and remarks above and further request that a Notice of Allowability be provided. Should the Examiner have any questions, please contact the undersigned.

No fees are believed due. However, please charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-3025.

Respectfully submitted,

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